

The English Page with Excerpts

Marriage Seminar by Sung Mook Kim

Home is our Base Camp



Have you ever climbed a very high mountain? It takes some 20 to 30 people who support you and in the end, only 2 or 3 get the privilege of reaching the top. That final team is called

the "summit team" and they are dependent on those at the base camp. And because the leader of the expedition holds the fort at the base camp, the summit teams are able to scale the height. In a similar way, the home is base camp for all social accomplishments. It's the starting point and the finishing point. We begin our day at home and end our day at home. The home must be a stable entity.

The home is a "factory" where people are made. Unfortunately, homes are breaking up today and are producing misfits and "unusable products". We need to buy back the home.

What is the definition of a successful person? According to a Harvard University and Carnegie Foundation's joint study, which researched elements of success, it was found that intelligence accounted for only 15 %, whereas the ability to handle relationships accounted for 85% of success.

What are the characteristics of a person who handles relationship well? A person who loves people, a person who respects people, a person who is considerate of people, and a person who acknowledges and submits to authority.

This is the very basics of home and parenting and we need to teach this to our children.



Q & A with Pastor Naito (final installment)



Q. I hear that you have a daughter that married a foreigner. Well, my daughter is interested in a foreign man as well, but to be honest, I have no confidence in relating to a non-Japanese family as in-laws. I would like to honor my daughter's decision as much as possible but my husband is definitely against her marrying the foreign man. What is your advice?

A. An international marriage does not imply that there is an

unscalable wall. Of course there are certain challenges related to culture and tradition, and if the couple is going to live abroad, that will require added commitment. But on the other hand, if the couples' nationality is the same, does that mean you won't have adjustment problems? Hardly so. More than these outward differences, heart-level compatibility such as shared faith, worldview, and family values are the important elements to look out for.

I think it's better if you don't go overboard with your in-laws and treat them as if you would a Japanese family with customary seasonal gifts and greetings which can burden the relationship. It's better to relate to them in a respectful but light-hearted way.

A girl should first get her father's blessing before marrying the foreign man, even if it takes a long time to convince the father. In the end this will make life much easier for all.

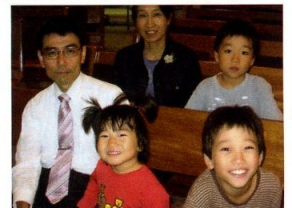
Marriage Encounters #4: "How A Trip to Holland Brought Us Together"

(interview)



Neither Masahiko or Mizuho were looking for a life partner at the time, but God brought them together through a visit to a Japanese church in Amsterdam. The pastor's wife said "You need to pray seriously about finding your

marriage partner." After returning to Japan they began seeing each other and continued their relationship for three years before marrying. He was 38 and she was over 30. The Takahashi's who are members of Yokohama Kirisuto Fukuin Kyokai reside in Yokohama and have three children.



Grief Care

by Junko Murakami
Lecturer, Seigakuin University



What do we do when someone close to us is experiencing grief over a death of a loved one?

Death is unavoidable for everyone who lives in this world. Mourning often turns a life around 180 degrees, yet, deeply sorrowful as it is, grieving is not an

insurmountable trial. So how should we relate to those who

are grieving? What is appropriate and what isn't? Grief care is ministering to those who are experiencing pain, coming alongside of a person who is mourning, and offering emotional support and comfort in a meaningful and genuine way. It often takes time and cannot be rushed, says Ms. Murakami.

In this article she shares about (1) the importance of expressing the emotions that accompany grief and not holding it in, (2) for others surrounding that grieving person to accept them as they are unconditionally and give room for them to work it out over time, and (3) to allow God to speak to that person rather than giving pat answers such as, "God meant it for good".

Sometimes when people think enough time has elapsed, they will insensitively expect the grieving person to "get on with life". But each person is different and we need to be discerning as well as good listeners who don't feel compelled to give advice.

Purity Ring Ceremony

Report



A purity ring ceremony was held at the International Christian Fellowship in Sapporo, led by missionary Gerald Goodall for encouraging the young people of the church to stay sexually pure. The ceremony vows stated (repeated after the leader), "True love is able to wait. I now promise...before God... myself... family... friends... future spouse... future children... from now until the day I marry, to stay sexually pure."

Then the adults also made their vows to stay pure and then presented the rings to their children.

One high school girl wrote: Non-believers see the purity ring as something which is old-fashioned and a kill-joy, but I see this ring as a blessing from God and my parents.

Another high school boy wrote: At my school virginity is poked fun at, but this ring has given me reason to be proud to be pure. I really think it's important and hope to convey the same message to friends at school.



A House Full

by Jon Benedict



Back in 1980, when I made a trip to Hong Kong, I heard that large numbers of people lived in small apartments so they had to practically sleep in shifts. Well, it's not that crowded in our home, but space is premium for our family of twelve due to our moderate sized house...

One benefit of a crowded home that we have discovered is that being in close quarters requires the children, and the parents, to have to share space which curbs selfish tendencies and ultimately enables them to enjoy being together, even if it means that the toilet is the only place one can have absolute privacy...

When Becky and I were first married we never imagined having ten children and I think we would have worried about space and raising, providing, and educating all of them. Now that God has given them to us, however, we are so grateful for the enrichment they have brought and wouldn't choose to have it otherwise in spite of our crowded home.

